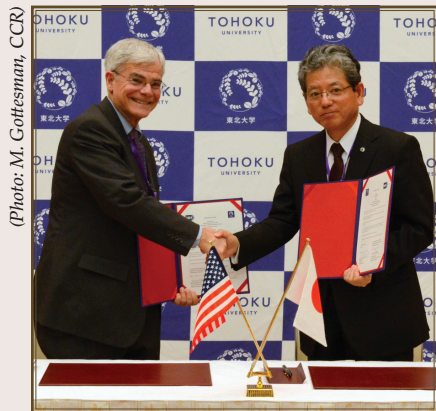


# Natural Disaster Brings Lasting Scientific Exchange



(Photo: M. Gottesman, CCR)

Michael Gottesman, M.D., and Susumu Satomi, M.D., Ph.D., President, Tohoku University

Natural disasters make immediate and dramatic headlines, but repairing their damage—both physical and emotional—is a much longer process. On the second anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, a delegation of researchers from the

NIH, including CCR Investigators Michael Gottesman, M.D., Tom Misteli, Ph.D., and Shioko Kimura, Ph.D., traveled to Tohoku University in Sendai, Japan, to continue building the scientific bridges that were first formed after that tragic event.

Japanese researchers are a strong presence at the NIH, not only among the senior scientific ranks but particularly as part of a large postdoctoral program sponsored by the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS). In the wake of the tsunami and earthquake that devastated several Japanese cities including Sendai in March 2011, these links served as a gateway for scientists from Tohoku University to continue their work at the NIH while their labs and lives were being repaired.

To commemorate the event and to continue building the collaborations and exchanges that stemmed from it, the NIH, Tohoku University, and JSPS held a joint two-day symposium, followed by site visits to the affected areas, including a regional hospital built only a few years before the earthquake hit. “Our guide took us to the basement and asked us to kneel down to look below,” said Misteli. “It turns out the entire hospital is built on springs and lifted several feet off the ground.” This feat of engineering enabled the hospital to escape damage during the disaster and to serve as an effective emergency response center during the crisis.

A second symposium is planned for the fall of 2014, which will bring a delegation of Tohoku University scientists to the NIH.